

COALITION FOR RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE NAVIGATION
NEWSLETTER, NOVEMBER 2017

The **COALITION** has accomplished several milestones and has established dialogues with organizations across Canada since it last sent out an update on its achievements. Collectively these achievements are moving the **COALITION** closer to its goals of developing pan Canadian support to influence Transport Canada to adopt national regulations for motorized pleasure craft based on environmental sciences.

COALITION Legislative and Research Activities

It is clear that we cannot sort out the motorized pleasure craft conflicts under the current regulations of **The Canada Shipping Act**. Science-based regulations, as proposed by the **COALITION**, offers a path to end sterile community debates and provide minimum regulations for maximum protection of our water bodies. This path is essential since the numbers of power boats continue to increase and the aggregate horsepower of motor boats is on an upward trend.

Against this backdrop, the **COALITION** has conceived preliminary legislative drafting instructions for new regulations and these instructions can be found on the **COALITION** web site at <http://coalitionnavigation.ca/legislation> The highlights in layman's language and the detailed legislative language version of these instructions can be found with this link.

Concurrently, the **COALITION** is planning its 2018 research activity which aims to obtain the environmental signatures of various classes of boats and monitor the cumulative impacts of motor boat activity. For each class of motorized pleasure craft, the water column that descends behind the propeller and the wave activity will be measured and backed-up by visual support tools.

As some may recall, research to-date on wake boats has shown that, with the ballasts engaged, these boats produce waves that must travel 300 metres before their power dissipates and the water column behind the propeller descends at least 5 metres. These factors suggest that with ballasts in operation, this type of pleasure craft requires a minimum of a 600-metre-wide passageway to avoid erosion of the shorelines. They also need at least 5 metres of water depth to pre-empt the churning up of the bottom sediments, an event which releases phosphorus in the process and thereby contributes to the proliferation of algae and other aquatic plants.

Just as the above-mentioned information on wake boats can serve as a basis for classifying a given water body and/or sections of the water body, the 2018 research will offer a means to classify water bodies with regard to other types of motor boats.

The monitoring component of the 2018 research will contribute the establishment of science-based rules for water bodies that currently experience heavy motor boat traffic, such as the Shuswap River and the Rideau River.

Transport Canada

On June 28, 2017, three **COALITION** representatives met in Ottawa with 5 officials of Transport Canada. The outcomes were positive.

Transport Canada indicated that it would include the **COALITION** in its engagement strategy for the purposes of consultations. Most important, Transport Canada noted that the timing of the **COALITION** meeting with them was good in that Transport Canada would raise the preoccupations and proposals of the **COALITION** with a newly formed interdepartmental committee which is tributary to the **Oceans Action Plan**.

As well, Transport Canada invited the **COALITION** to apply to be a part of one advisory committee and participate in the national meetings of another advisory committee plus explore opportunities within Transport Canada concerning support for the **COALITION** research program.

Québec

The **COALITION** has received 25 resolutions of support from municipal and regional governments plus environmental organizations from across the province.

Numerous presentations were made to groups within the province to encourage signatures of support and memberships.

As well, many discussions were held with Mayors, director generals and counsellors of many municipalities across the province.

Other activities include two research studies over the course of the last two years.

One study **COALITION** study was that on the impacts of wake boat water columns sponsored by la MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut (regional government), the municipalities of Estérel, Ste-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson and Ste-Agathe-des-Monts plus the L'Association pour la Protection de l'Environnement du Lac des Sables.

The second study, a **COALITION** Review of the Literature was financed by the municipality of Lac-Sergent, L'Association des propriétaires du lac Sept-Îles and L'Association pour la protection de l'environnement du lac Saint-Joseph.

The 2018 research will offer a means to classify water bodies with regard to other types of motor boats.

The monitoring component of the 2018 research will contribute the establishment of science-based rules for water bodies that currently experience heavy motor boat traffic.

Safe Quiet Lakes, Muskoka, Ontario

On September 8, 2017, two **COALITION** Board members were in Toronto for a meeting with three members of the Board of Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL), an education and advocacy group that covers the vast Muskoka region, north of Toronto.

Various forms of alliance paths were raised. The SQL is interested in the **COALITION** science-based approach and concurs that a regulatory approach is needed to deal with wake and related issues. But the SQL has to review its own priorities before confirming next steps.

In the interim, the **COALITION** has received a formal invitation to participate in an Ontario stakeholders meeting in Port Carling in April 2018.

At the SQL-**COALITION** Toronto meeting of September 2017, SQL presented the results of its Erin survey of residents of the Muskoka region for which 3291 people responded.

On one hand, the SQL survey demonstrated the polarization that stems from the voluntary codes of conduct prescribed by Transport Canada. To this effect 45% said they are in favour of more regulations while 31% are against. On greater enforcement, nearly half, or 49%, are in favour of more enforcement and 30% are against. This data confirms the **COALITION's** contention that the voluntary codes of conduct are formulae for an impasse.

On the other hand, in response to specific questions in the Erin survey, such as no wake zones in ecologically sensitive areas, noise, drinking and driving, 62% to 71% expressed positive views on more regulations and more enforcement. In effect, since 71% are favourable of no wake zones in environmentally fragile zones, it stands to reason that the majority would be onside for respecting the environmental tolerances of an entire water body.

The SQL/Erin survey corroborates the **COALITION** contention that both social science indicators, or public opinion, and science-based restrictions on certain kinds of operation of certain types of boats, go hand-in-hand.

Rideau River, Eastern Ontario

On September 17, 2017, the **COALITION** delivered a presentation to Rideau River residents in the Manotick area, south of Ottawa.

What is particularly striking about the Rideau River is the volume of traffic on weekends. One could have four or more motorized pleasure craft crisscrossing one another at a given moment and there is rarely more than one minute that goes by without the passage of a motor boat. Thus, the waves are constant.

For these reasons, the Rideau River is an ideal site for the monitoring component of the **COALITION's** 2018 research agenda since doing so would offer insights into the cumulative impacts of boating activity on the entire marine environment. (Refer to the section "**COALITION** Legislative and Research Activities")

To complement the monitoring activity and because an image is worth a thousand words, a video will be taken of extraordinary motorized pleasure craft activity, once the 2018 season starts.

The follow-up to the September 2017 meeting includes working on the potential for a Rideau River chapter of the **COALITION** and a resolution backing the **COALITION**. At that meeting, seventeen Rideau River residents signed the declaration of support for the **COALITION**.

Shuswap River, Regional District of North Okanagan, BC

The volume of motorized pleasure craft is also an issue on the Shuswap River, a fragile shallow salmon river in the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) in BC.

There are an estimated 3000 to 4000 motor boat passages per season on this river, a river for which the slightest wake can kill the salmon fry and destroy salmon nests. The cumulative impacts of the constant traffic have been known to even uproot cedar trees.

The Pro-River group for the Shuswap has been fighting for restrictions on motor boats on the river since 1994. The group organized two referendums, one that did not conform with Transport Canada requirements and one that did conform, and the Pro-River group won both referendums. But that wasn't enough to influence Transport Canada to intervene.

In 2017, the RDNO hired a mediator to attempt to find common ground between the Pro-River and the pro-motor boat people and the outcome was just another stalemate.

The RDNO will conduct further consultations in 2018, including with First Nations, prior to making any proposals to Transport Canada.

Wrap-up

The **COALITION** is slowly moving towards its goal, community-by-community, to build up national support for science-based regulations by continuing its dialogue with, and in collaboration with, Transport Canada.